



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

Kavanagh Urges Immediate Release of State Funds for COVID-19 Emergency Food Aid

BRIAN KAVANAGH April 7, 2020

| ISSUE: **FOOD PANTRY, EMERGENCY, COVID-19, NON-PROFIT HUMAN SERVICES ORGANIZATIONS**



On April 7, Senator Kavanagh, along with 44 of his colleagues, called on the State to immediately release funds that were included in the State budget to enable Met Council to help provide food and services to more than 225,000 individuals and 40 regular food pantries. The text of the legislators' letter to the Governor is below; the original may be viewed via the link above.

April 7, 2020

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo

Executive Chamber

The Capitol

Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We write to request the immediate release of \$5 million to the “Metropolitan New York Coordinating Council on Jewish Poverty” (known as Met Council) from the 2020/21 Budget Special Public Health Emergency Appropriation Account. As has been widely reported, significant undesignated emergency funds for New York’s food pantries are to be disbursed from this account for expenses in the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the Passover holiday starting Wednesday night, Met Council has been working overtime as New York’s only kosher food bank to provide nutrition, tradition, and dignity to vulnerable kosher New Yorkers. This past month alone, they have distributed millions of pounds of free food to 149 distribution sites across New York despite the greatest challenges.

Temporary workers are replacing elderly volunteers to keep their warehouse and pantries open. And despite cancelled produce shipments, disrupted supply chains and spikes in the wholesale price of food staples, Met Council is continuing service to 225,000 existing clients and 40 regular food pantries while mobilizing emergency food to thousands of additional families facing new financial hardship.

Met Council has even taken it upon themselves to provide homebound Holocaust survivors with food deliveries directly to their homes. Through a new warehouse that they have secured, and with limited private funding, Met Council just launched a pilot with Uber that

is delivering food directly to the homes of 500 Holocaust survivors. You can read more about it here in the New York Post and AM New York.

Without the rapid disbursement of these funds, it is impossible for them to sustain the growing food security needs of the kosher community that has been especially hard hit during this pandemic. As you know, Met Council has already incurred millions in emergency expenses and contingencies related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please immediately provide this \$5 million funding to Met Council so they can continue to provide emergency kosher food to the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

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cc: Mr. Robert Mujica, New York State Budget Director

Ms. Melissa DeRosa, Secretary to Governor Andrew M. Cuomo